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Or, Can A

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IF the Huffs and Hot-spurs of this Age and Juncture were onely among the *Seculars*; 't were hopeful that their respective *Regulars* might reclaime them; but if they kindle the fire, who should quench it? A blaze or breaking forth must be otherwise prevented.

Religion and *Reason* are, or ought to be, the Guides of mankind; by an Examen of both, the Question in the Front will be answered.

To Parallel any earthly *Monarch* with the heavenly *King of Kings*, is too heathenish for this part of the World called *Christendom*: And therefore to animadvert onely upon the blindness of those Zealots for *Law* and *Temple*, that said, *Out of Gallilee ariseth no Prophet*; That part of *Palestine* bordering upon the *Gentiles*, and influenc'd by the maritime Traffick of *Tyre*, as also with the People of those twenty Citys near it, which *Solomon* gave King *Hiram*; 'tis probable they were more heathenish and averse to the *Jewish* Religion and way of Worship, then those of *Judea*, where Christ was indeed born, *viz.* in *Bethlehem*, but educated in *Nazareth*, a City in that part of the Country called *Gallilee of the Gentiles*, where he did his first miracle, *viz.* in *Cana*, *turning Water into Wine*; notwithstanding which, the *Jews* beleeved him not, though 'tis said the *Gallilaans received Him*. *Joh.* 4. 45.

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Now if concession of *intire consciencious liberty, viz.* without constraint or restraint, be a Christian Gospel practise, though thereby *tares* be suffered *to grow* with the *good seed* till the World's end; then, 'tis to be fear'd, that those who decry it, do mistake themselves, and the most true Religion; themselves, by saying *they are inward Jews*, and (for want of the heart Circumcision) *are not*: and the true Religion, by *teaching for doctrine the Commandements of Men*, but dis-allowing the precepts or dictates of Christ to the conscience, without (but especially against) which, all outward conformity *not being of Faith, is sin.*

And to let pass the want of an Example in this kind among all our *Protestant Monarchs*, for breaking those yokes of the worst kind, both in later and former years, since the first *Christian Emperour Constantine*, 'tis apparent that this among us is done by a *King* of another communion then what is called *Reformed*, which makes the greater wonder; and why of Offence, rather then Approbation?

That *Saul*, when annoynted King, should be *among the Prophets*, and he of the same name, after his conversion, among the *Apostles*, though a *Persecuter* afore; was a sudden and unexpected change; but that *meat* should *come forth from the Eater, and from the strong sweetness*, was a riddle that *Israel*'s oppressors could never understand, till they *plowed with a Heifer* which was none of their own.

That *Sion* should *be in pain like a Woman in travel, go forth of the City* (of visible or outward safety) *and dwell in the Field* (a state of suffering or Expolure) and after this *go even to Babylon, and there be delivered*, yea, there *be redeemed by Almighty God from the hand of her Enemys*, all which seemes a great Mystery, but is also as great a Truth: and so it is, that God sometimes chuses the *despised things of this World*, and things *that are not* (*at least in appearance*) *to brings to nought things that are.*

'Tis obvious, that many Men are this day out-gone, both in their Faith and Reason, by a Roman Prince, in granting such *intire Christian Liberty*, which was hitherto deny'd by former Protestant Powers of all sorts; and as it was a despis'd incredible notion before, so 'tis now credible, because a real practise or performance: Let then the *visible establish'd* Church, take heed, she be not *brought to nought*, by the un-seen Church in *Legal establishment*,

bliſhment, whether it be on her right or left hand.

Poſſibly 'twill be ſaid theſe are but *cloudy Allegorys*: Therefore to ſpeak more plainly, A Popiſh Ruler promotes the *Proteſtant Reformed Religion*, by granting *intire* conſciencious *Liberty*; whereas a Proteſtant Church or Ruler, denying it, Stops it's growth or progreſs: For theſe Reaſons,

1. As *light* ſpreads it ſelf into a Houſe with *windows open*, ſo it enters not when they are *ſhut*, but by un-expected cracks or creviſes of wind and weather's making, like thoſe convictions, which grow upon the World by the ſtormes of Perſecution rais'd againſt innocent Sufferers: and Man's *ſpirit* being *the candle of the Lord*, the fiery zeale of pretenders to ſnuff it by humane violence, tends rather to dim or extinguiſh it's light, then clear it; at leaſt if the rare attainment of *perfect love*, which *caſts out all fear*, be wanting to revive the flame: therefore whether a Church of ſecular power, that *quenches the ſmoking flax*, or a Ruler that cheriſhes it with reviving incouragement, till it become a *ſhining flame*, be moſt agreeable to the Principle and Practiſe of the Gallilean Prophet, is a queſtion ſoon anſwered.

2. The Popiſh Ruler by giving liberty does his part very honourably to make Religion appear *bare-fac't*; whereas the Proteſtant Church or Ruler denying the like freedom, propagate their Religion not ſo truly as in *diſ-guiſe* or *maſquerade*.

3. A Popiſh Ruler giving liberty draws to his Religion with the cords of a Man, but a Proteſtant Church or Ruler dealing by force of more then perſwaſion and example, makes beaſtly markes or impreſſions, which are altogether inferiour to the glorious conduct of the Divine Nature, and tending much to debaſe the Humane.

4. A Popiſh Ruler by giving liberty, does actually allow of light, both higher and lower then his own, among the people under him; the Proteſtant Ruler denying it on behalf of a Church that pretends not to infallibility, impoſing his meaſure of light, it appears but dim, if not darkneſs, to them who for ought he knows are more inlightned then himſelf.

5. A Popiſh Ruler giving liberty of a publick way of Worſhip not agreable to his own, ſeemes to have a love for ſtrangers, if not Enemys to his Religion, which is his neareſt concern; whereas a Proteſtant Ruler denying it, appears to hate, or at leaſt

dis-countenance his very freinds, becauſe not of his own meaſure.

6. A Popiſh Ruler by granting conſciencious liberty, promotes that Goſpel-variety which is of the new World, while a Proteſtant Church or Ruler by reſtraint to one meaſure of light, admits not the growth of all thoſe Plants, which are of the heavenly Father's planting, becauſe he neither knows nor underſtands them : the tree of life bears no leſs then twelve manner of fruits, yielding them monethly, and her leaves are for healing of the nations, the benefit whereof is not taſted either by Men or Chriſtians univerſally, where the pail of incloſure is for one ſort onely.

7. A Popiſh Ruler giving liberty of conſcience, convinces Gain-ſayers, that his way is right, leading to the true End of ſaving Soules, by allowing every one to ſearch and try what is Truth ; whereas a Proteſtant Church or Rulers otherwiſe begets ſuſpicion upon the end, though true, becauſe the way is wrong, or at leaſt right in their own Eyes onely.

'Tis ſaid that ſeven is a perfect number, and though more may be added, yet let theſe ſuffice, at leaſt, for one ſheet, to evince the poſſibility of that to be a truth which is aſſerted to be improbable.

And further to be yet more plain. The cry is, Proteſtant liberty is granted for a while, onely to umbrage the eſtabliſhing the Popiſh much longer.

This is *Charity* of a different kind from that which *thinkes no evil, but bears, hopes, believes and indures all things* : yet admit this liberty ſhould prove ſhorter liv'd than ſome that wiſh't it an abortive ; 'tis asked under what Perſons in power had it ſuch an *avow'd birth* even thus long, for ſome by-paſt *thouſands of years?* Muſt we not revert back to thoſe heathen Monarchs, *Cyrus, Darius* and *Artaxerxes*, for a Precedent, who decreed rebuilding the walls of *City* and *Temple*, thereby promoting a *Religion* and Worſhip not their own, and to which they were Strangers ?

But further, is *Chriſt preach't out of Envy*, and ſhall they who profeſs doing it of *good will*, be ſorry or offended ? Will it not make their *miſſion* as queſtionable, as that Apoſtle's was *clear*, who in that caſe profeſs't *his rejoycing ?*

Are *Embaſſadours* true to their *Prince*, who repine at his budding

ding intereſt among a people forreign to his own *Dominion*? can that *light* wherein the *Everlaſting Goſpel of the Kingdom* ſhall be publiſht to all nations, admit ſuch *darkneſs*? or its true effect, viz. *love to Enemies*, conſiſt with ſuch *diſſimulation* to very Friends, who are only tolerated to Preach in *corners*, without publick maintenance; and ſhall they who have it without grudging, and in *the chief places of concourſe*, be angry or offended at them? For ſhame let them *forgive this wrong*.

Now if *jealouſy* (which is ſaid to be *the rage of a man*) ſhould provoke a Ruler againſt ſuch as cauſe his *Good to be evil ſpoken of*, at whoſe door will be laid the offence? And if ſome weak Proteſtants ſhould diſ-like the way of *Perſecuting* or *Impoſing* upon *Conſcience*, ſo as to queſtion the truth of their own Religion for their ſakes that propagate it, by ſuch wrong means, and incline to thoſe who do otherwiſe, how will it be anſwer'd by ſuch as lay the *Stumbling-block*?

It muſt be acknowledged that all our outward attempts to force *Conſcience*, though never ſo Erroneous, are to be *exploded* by the very *light of Nature*, as well as *Grace*; not only becauſe 'tis apt to *recoile* againſt that which does not convince, but alſo a man's *Conſcience* is not in his power: For though *Fleſh and Blood can never inherit God's Kingdom*, yet in this caſe it ſuffers with ſuch *Innocence* as if it were *holy*, becauſe 'tis not, nor ought to be, the Souls leader, but follower; and its true fault (though for ſuffering wrongfully) would be to aſſume the contrary.

And if on theſe Principles, which are common to thoſe of both Religions, as well the Proteſtant as the Papiſt, this Liberty be granted, is it not a *Royal Favour* to be ſhewn without difference or diſtinction, for *Charity* it ſelf *begins at home*? And therefore if it be extended in other matters to thoſe of the Kings own Communion, in the firſt place, 'twould ſeem ungrateful to regret; not only becauſe 'tis below Chriſtians to be much concern'd for more then their proper Intereſts, *viz. Of ſerving God without the fear of men*, but alſo that it appears a kind of impoſure upon a Supream Ruler, eſpecially that ſtrains his Authority to make all the People under him as free as himſelf, for any of them to be un-ſatisfied, in wanting a ſhare of rule in the things of Men.

If *Chriſt's Kingdom be not of this World*, his true Diſciples ſhould rather *fear* then *deſire* to be great on Earth, that thereby they

they loſe the ſence or ſight of his more ſpiritual Realm or Dominion, which *is in Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

The *charming* Priviledges of a *private Life* both for Soul and Body, do far tranſcend the vain ſhews which may be expected to walk in, by thoſe who are ignorant of a *Publick*, wherein a *ſeeming Ruler* over ſome few, that bare the Head and bow the Knee, is (if he does his duty) but a *real Servant* to all.

And if a man hath indeed a meaſure of that true *Wiſdom which is from above*, 'twill conſtrain his readineſs to ſay in like caſe as *Daniel* did to *Belſhazer*, on his offer of the *ſcarlet Robe*, a *Golden Chain*, and *the third place* of authority *in the Kingdome*, *Let the Kings gifts be to himſelf, and his rewards to another.*

But further, Are not the Proteſtant Diſſenters the Kings new friends, and of no other then his own making? Which being ſo, *a peck of Salt*, according to the proverb, is but proper to ſeaſon the confidence of *new Acquaintance:* The moral or application of which in this caſe may be ſerious, *viz.* That if the Diſſenting Proteſtants do become (as Chriſt's Diſciples) the true *Salt of* our Engliſh Earth, to ſeaſon the places where their lot is caſt, with ſuch ſavory Principles and Practiſes of *Self-denial*, *Humility*, and *Holineſs*, as by *Fearing God* and *Honouring the King*, the People may be convinc't of their Religion and Loyalty, the impute of Schiſme and Rebellion will gradually vaniſh, and make way for their better acceptance. Mean while, if apprehenſions ſhould remain that the *Romiſh Religion* is like to be longer liv'd in *England* than a *Proteſtant Toleration*; there is one word more then hath been mentioned, tending to chek all ſuch ſurmiſes, even beſides all thoſe outward arguments already publiſht, of *Solemn Publick Declaration*, a great *overballance in number*; *ſecular Intereſt*, &c.

And that is, The calling to mind, that the moſt High God rules, who by means known and unknown, can turn the point of good or ill upon the Deceiver or Deceived, ſince both are his; and thereby cauſe the living to know that he alone rules in the Kingdom of men, giving it to whomſoever he will, as beſt ſuits his holy ends and concerns in this lower world, whether they be Recieved or Rejected by preſent or future Generations.

Yet more particularly: A Kings Prerogative, as ſecond to that of Chriſt, is very ſtrong; and as *Solomon* ſays, *Two are better then One, and a threefold cord is not eaſily broken*; for if this work of

Chriſtian

Christian Liberty be of God (which is indubitable) as well as the King, the conſciencious People of all ſorts are a third and numerous Party concern'd in its benefit, who by their Faith and Prayers will make many an *Effort* at Heaven-gates, rather then loſe their *New obtain'd Freedom.*

The Captive Iſraelites being once ſet free by the Decree of *Cyrus* to re-build the *Temple*, tho ſtop't in their Work by his Succeſſors, yet they went on without any more licence upon Earth, being ſtirr'd up to it from Heaven by the *Prophets*, tho confirm'd afterwards by King *Darius.*

Queen *Eſther's*, addreſſing (un-call'd) to King *Ahaſuerus*, after ſolemn Faſting and Prayer, was *againſt Law.*

The *three Children's* not bowing to *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image, *Daniell* praying with his *windows open as at other times* not withſtanding the decree'd prohibition:

All theſe were publick breaches and affronts to the Laws of thoſe Kingdoms reſpectively, and after the *Saints* aforementioned had broke thoſe Laws to keep *Gods Law*, the Kings being convinc't, changed their Decrees contrary to their reſpective conſtitutions, and tho they were heathen, yet they owned the true God and thoſe that ſerv'd Him, contrary to their own *Laws* and Religion.

The Decrees of *Heaven* are indeed un-changeable, but the Laws of Men are mutuable like themſelves; and thoſe Kings or Rulers who change for the better, as his intereſt leads them, who is *King of Kings*, they will find it their own intereſt alſo, to indulge them who are his free or new-born People, in purſuance of what is promis'd, that *Strangers ſhall build up their Walls, and their Kings Miniſter to them, for that Nation and Kingdom which will not ſerve them ſhall periſh.* Yea *thoſe Nations ſhall be utterly waſted.*

It appears then that the intereſt of the *conſciencious People*, which is *Liberty*, hath an *aſcendent* over other Nations no leſs then that part of their own which would keep them in bondage, whereof *Iſraells* being led by a high hand out of *Egypt* to do their *Sacrifice to God*, and *Spoyling the Egyptians* who had detain'd them ſome time from it, as they alſo deſtroy'd the *ſeven Nations* in and near *Canaan* that reſiſted them, is a great Example.

Therefore is it the Kings wiſdom to ſuſpend the Execution of thoſe Laws, which in themſelves are already void on God's ac-

count, who being the *ſupreame Legiſlator of Heaven and Earth*, ought, as the Apoſtles ſaid, to be *obeyed rather then Men:* For if a Law ſhould be made, that Men muſt not eat when they are hungry, not drink when they are thirſty, 'tis not to be obeyed, becauſe againſt nature; ſo if a Law be made, that Men muſt not pray, when Gods word ſays they ſhould do it always and every where, or if a Law be to forſake aſſembling together as the manner of ſome is, which the Scripture plainly forbids; ſuch Laws are as much againſt the Heavenly *Divine Nature*, as thoſe aforementioned are againſt the *Humane*.

Nor is Gods Law made *for the Righteous, but for the Lawleſs and diſobedient, profane, unholy*, &c.

And if there be a People in the Kings Dominions, againſt whom is *no Condemnation*, but *are free from the Law of Sin and Death*, then ſurely the Kings late conceſſion of no New Liberty, but that of *Conſcience*, does import, that his royal intentions are onely to free them from *Mans condemnation* whom he thinks *God doth not condemne*, for *if our hearts condemne us not*, then *our confidence towards God* is very alowable, not withſtanding all that can be ſaid by the Men of *Judea* againſt thoſe of *Gallilee*.

Nor is this way of promoting the Proteſtant Religion, by a Roman Ruler more decry'd by them that disbelieve it, then the *Samaritan* party was miſtaken, when they thought that *Darius* would not favour the *Jews*, of old by decreeing their *re-building* the *Temple* after they had expreſs't ſuch confidence to begin a new to do it againſt the prohibition of his Predeceſſors.

Now if God ceaſes not to raiſe ſuch unexpected Inſtruments to carry on his Work, as are or have been miſtruſted to check, or obſtruct it; how ill will it become the Leaders or Fathers of our *Reformed* (at leaſt ſo called) *Church* not to further and improve this late granted Liberty, ſince 'tis their place and profeſſion to help, not hinder all Male-births of righteouſneſs and holineſs whatſoever.

For God can change the Heart not only of *Prince* but *People* alſo, and 'twill reflect much upon us called *Proteſtants*, to retain a ſpirit of *Perſecution* and averſion to *Liberty*, when *Papiſts* themſelves ſhall renounce the one and embrace the other.

And if the day be come, or near it, wherein 'tis promiſed, That *the Egyptians ſhall know the Lord, do Sacrifice and Oblation*, yea, *Vow a Vow unto God and perform it*, then we ſhould be cauti-

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ous of blasting them, whom God shall bless with a *new Name* and *Nature*; for if this be the season wherein God himself says, *Blessed be Egypt my People*, 'tis not for us Christians to maintain *partition walls* longer 'twixt us and the very *Heathen* themselves, because they are said to be *Christs Inheritance*, and in *Every Nation he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness is accepted of him*, how then can we prosper by rejecting such as God accepteth?

Hence is it therefore that this concession of *Intire Liberty* made by the King of *Great Britain*, tends to his immortal Honour, as he is in this manner, not only a *Prince* of a very great People, but as by this action he is become a *Nursing Father*, to all, of all sorts under him, in their Religious or Christian Rights, which are much more dear and near to them, then what is Civil; not but that their enjoyment of both is their Confidence, because the Greater always comprehends the Less.

And if this intire Liberty had found its happy birth before the the unhappy Wars broke forth against *King Charles* the First, 'tis very improbable, that their success had been as it was; much more that our present *King James* the Second, had been necessitated to raise new Arms against his Enemies; and indeed the Blood which hath been spilt for more then forty years past, might have been prevented.

But blessed be God, that better late then never, we can now bid this *new Principle and Practice* welcome into the *old World*, which will cause our *Swords to be turned into Plowshares, and Spears into Pruning-Hooks*, and will instruct us of this Nation, yea the Rulers and People of other Nations, as they shall receive and become subject to it, *to learn War no more*. For this *intire Liberty* hath made as intire and compleat a conquest which is of *Hearts*, far exceeding that of *Hands*, because as the King hath set us free to serve the living God without the fears of Men, so do we avow our selves bound to the King in interest and duty by stronger bonds, then *Slavish Fear* or *Impos'd Oaths* can oblige.

And our defect of duty to the King, will be now no less to our selves, since his Government is made thus easy, for as his Throne is clothed with *double Honour*, so that part of the people, who by his gracious Indulgence are relieved from their *harrasing Catch-Poles and Persecuting Informers*, will be *doubly guilty*, if denying *Cæsar* his due, because we are the chief *Criminals*, if not

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giving God his due, since the King is pleased so freely to allow, and incourage it.

And further if the Kings Heart be in *Gods hand to turn as the rivers of Water*, what will they resemble, who would dam or stop his Christian and Royal Progress, but persons of an *Earthy Principle and Practice*, for those inferiour ends which are not without regret, to be named among us who are called Christians?

Nor is it for those, who very sensibly feel the warmth of this late and *new Protection* to hesitate the Kings prevailing Perswasion of the *National Assembly* (when called) to agree to this so *Universal a good for Mankind*, by freeing their better and more noble part from those Impositures, with which the more degenerous sort of men have attempted to Embondage them.

Now in this procedure, who can say less, than, *God* Prosper and Save (yea *Save Eternally*) the King of Great *Britain*, who having almost incredibly (till Royally Perform'd) thus out done, not only all his Home-born Predecessors, but his Forreign, Best and Greatest Neighbours, whether they be *Crowned Heads* or *Free States*: If therefore it shall please God to inrich his Royal Heart with *Grace*, so as to go on as he hath begun, the potent interests of *France* and *Spain* must soon bow to him, as he becomes more justly Aggrandiz'd with the titles of most Christian and most Catholick King, not only in *Europe*, but in the known World.

FINIS